



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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PRESS RELEASE

MARY JO WHITE, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that the Government has entered into agreements with Westchester County, White Plains, Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and Port Chester regarding their compliance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide 9-1-1 services to the hearing impaired.

As part of a nationwide program implemented by the United States Department of Justice, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York is conducting compliance reviews of 9-1-1 service providers in its district. Because 9-1-1 services are so critical, the Justice Department has made access to such services for users of telecommunications devices for the deaf ("TDDs") a high priority in its nationwide ADA compliance review program.

The ADA prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADA requires cities to ensure that

their telephone emergency services, including 9-1-1 services, provide direct access to individuals who use TDDs.

Under the agreements, Westchester County, White Plains, Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and Port Chester agreed to modify their current practices to ensure that the services provided to individuals who use TDDs are as effective as those provided to others. Westchester County agreed to provide all 9-1-1 centers in Westchester County with sufficient TDD keyboards so that each call-taker position at each 9-1-1 center has the capability to respond directly to callers on a TDD. Westchester County, White Plains, Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and Port Chester also agreed to:

- o adopt and implement a policy which provides that 9-1-1 call takers consider "silent" open lines as potential TDD calls and query those lines via the TDD to determine if the caller is using a TDD;
- o provide comprehensive training for every 9-1-1 call taker including instruction on identifying and processing TDD calls; and
- o conduct test TDD calls on a quarterly basis and submit semi-annual audit reports summarizing the results to the United States Attorney's Office

Ms. WHITE stated: "Access to 9-1-1 services is essential for all people, including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech impairments. With the implementation of these settlement agreements, Westchester County, White Plains, Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and Port Chester are taking

important steps toward ensuring that people who use TDDs are afforded equal access to vital emergency services."

Assistant United States Attorneys KATHY S. MARKS and HEIDI A. WENDEL are in charge of the case.

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